



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

\*\*\***NEWS RELEASE**\*\*\*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DPI proposals support enhanced teacher qualifications**

*Report makes recommendations for further work*

MADISON—A preliminary report from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction on the Wisconsin Teacher Distribution Project, finds that the state's efforts supporting and improving recruitment, retention, and professional development of educators are on target for lessening the disparity among experienced teachers in Wisconsin schools. The report found no significant disparities in terms of education level or licensure, but did identify disparity in the distribution of experienced teachers.

"This study can help guide us in determining how to improve access to experienced teachers for students in high-needs schools," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "Great teachers can make up for many disadvantages. So, it is more critical than ever before that the classroom teacher be regarded as the single most important variable in the academic success of students."

Burmaster announced two initiatives, today, to support new teachers in high-needs schools. Priority will be given to high-needs schools or schools serving high concentrations of socio-economically disadvantaged students and students of color in Wisconsin Peer Review and Mentoring grants, of up to \$500,000 of state funding, to support new teachers through mentoring, and professional development. Additionally, Federal Title I funding will be targeted to:

- provide incentives to attract experienced, effective principals and teachers to work in high-needs schools and schools serving high concentrations of socio-economically disadvantaged students and students of color, and
- fund professional development in those schools that will support improved student learning.

"These initiatives add to our other important initiatives that focus on providing supports for recruitment, retention, and professional development of effective teachers and leaders in high-needs schools," said Burmaster, "and help parents, teachers, and administrators come together as they strive to improve student learning."

(more)

The preliminary report was guided by a state -level advisory committee composed of legislators, a school board member, educators, University of Wisconsin researchers, and association representatives.

For the Wisconsin analysis, data included teacher certification files, school district and school data, student testing data, free and reduced-price lunch program participant data, student racial identification, and teacher assignment data. The preliminary report found no significant disparities in terms of education level and licensure of educators. Schools with high poverty, high percentages of students of color, and low academic achievement were found to have higher percentages of teachers with less than three years of experience. The report also outlined recommendations for further actions, notably, mentoring, reasonable class sizes, principal support, opportunities for collaboration with peers, and access to high-quality materials.

The preliminary report made it clear that Wisconsin was already mounting a strong response to the challenge of achieving educational equity. Highlighted are

- The Wisconsin Quality Educator Initiative, otherwise known as Chapter PI 34, which restructured state rules for the preparation, licensure, and continuing professional development of all educators.
- The State Superintendent's *New Wisconsin Promise Schools of Recognition* program identifies high-performing, high-needs schools and shares their strategies for success.
- A number of statewide collaboratively developed electronic systems that support educators in the development and completion of high-quality plans for professional development linked to improved student learning in the classroom.
- *The New Wisconsin Promise*, our state's commitment increasing achievement for all students and closing the achievement gap in Wisconsin's schools.

"We know what works. Mentoring programs for new teachers, smaller class sizes, opportunities for professional collaboration among educators, are all essential to providing a quality education for every child," said Burmaster.

The preliminary report of the Wisconsin Teacher Distribution Project, a part of the *Equal Access to Quality Teachers Project*, in collaboration with the Education Trust and funded by the Joyce Foundation, involved three mid-western states—Wisconsin, Illinois, and Ohio,—and one major urban district from each state, and provides a baseline for further research to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap.

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